

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-13 and 15-19 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1-12 and 15 have been allowed. Claims 13 and 17-19 are hereby amended. No new matter has been introduced.

Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. ALLOWED CLAIMS

Applicants respectfully acknowledge the allowance of claims 1-12 and 15.

III. CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 13 and 17-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Particularly, claims 13 and 17-19 were rejected based on the preamble being allegedly misdescriptive of the steps in the body of the claims. Claims 13 and 17-19 have been accordingly amended to address the alleged confusion between the preamble

and the body of the claims. In view of the present amendment, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are, therefore, respectfully requested.

IV. RESPONSE TO REJECTIONS

Claims 13 and 17-19 have undergone minor amendments to address the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112. Further, claims 13 and 17-19 include the same patentable features to those recited in allowed claims 1, 12, and 15. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 13 and 17-19.

V. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other claims are dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above, and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

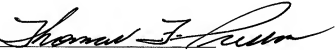
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims remaining in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any
overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,

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